Priesthood Succession Claims

Overview

This study guide is the last on this subject. It deals with the claims of other Fundamentalist groups. It is hoped that there is enough information contained in this series to show the credibility of our Priesthood succession claims, and the fallacy of other claims.

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Study Suggestions -

Begin your study with prayer, praying for God to reveal the truth to you through His Spirit.

Read the entire study guide

Answer the study questions – on the next page

Be conscious of the Spirit throughout your studies, and close with prayer.

Make a list of any additional questions you might have,
to share with the Seventy who gave you this guide.

Future Studies

It is intended that other study guides will be available on other subjects. Additional study materials can be recommended by the person you received this guide from.

Questions to Ponder

There have been various type of claims of succession -

1. Succession by Lineage? Adoption? Reincarnation?
2. Succession by Council of Fifty?
3. Succession by LDS Church Council of Twelve?
4. Succession by fallen prophet? apostasy?
5. Succession by angel? re-restoration? special revelation?
6. Succession is irrelevant (no authority left, or every Priesthood holder has sufficient)
7. Succession by continuation of authority – keys, laws, ordinances, offices, and quorums.

Various groups have formed typifying such claims -

1&2. LeBaron – Joel / Ross / Collier / Black / Green
3. The modern LDS Church corporation
4. FLDS / ? / 2nd Ward / Naylor / Blackmore
4. Peterson / Thompson
5. TLC Manti, Harmston
6. Independents – Woolley / Indian Prophet
7. The Apostolic United Brethren (or Priesthood)

In examining such groups some important questions apply -

Are the keys of the Priesthood necessary?
Will they continue from Joseph's day to the present?
What qualifications are necessary to preside over the Priesthood?
How many can preside over the Priesthood at the same time?
What ordinances must be done under the direction of the President of the Priesthood?
What must I do to receive all the ordinances through the proper authority?

True Succession
According to the Scriptures and Prophets

Only one can preside over the keys of the Priesthood at a time

D&C 107:21 Of necessity there are presidents, or presiding officers growing out of, or appointed of or from among those who are ordained to the several offices in these two priesthoods. (see v. 65)

Joseph F. Smith: "Never is there but one appointed at a time to hold the keys of the kingdom of God pertaining to the earth." *(Journal of Discourses 24:191)*

D&C 81:1 ... my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.; [2] Unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood:

D&C 132:7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and <u>there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred</u>), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

Heber C. Kimball: "Brother Brigham holds the keys of this kingdom and nobody else holds them as he does. Others hold keys, but they hold them under him." *(Teachings of President Brigham Young 3:173)*

George Q. Cannon: "There may be others who have this authority also; and I thank God there are many who hold this authority – that is the authority of the Apostleship; but they hold it subordinate to the man who holds the keys, they cannot exercise this authority only as he shall consent or delegate or authorize them to do so. There is but one man who has the power to exercise this authority, to stand, as it were, in God's stead, to be His voice unto the people, and that is the man who stands at the head and who is President, and who holds the keys by virtue of the appointment of God." (Journal of Discourses 24:274-5, see 13:49 & 23:364)

Plural marriages can only be carried out under their direction

D&C 132:18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, <u>through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power</u>, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

Joseph Smith: "the sealing power is always vested in one man, and that there never was, nor never would be, but one man on the earth at a time to hold the keys of the sealing power in the Church. That all sealings must be performed by the man holding the keys, or by his dictation" *(Letter of Brigham Young to William Smith)*

The Lord to John Taylor: "No person, or people, or nation can enter into the principle of celestial marriage unless they come in by me, saith the Lord, and obey the law of my Gospel through the medium of him

who is appointed unto this power, as made known unto my people through my servant, Joseph" *(Uncanonized Revelation to John Taylor 25/26 June 1882. Unpublished Revelations 80:6-7.)*

Brigham Young dropped Zera Pulsipher from the First Council of Seventy because he "transcended the bounds of the Priesthood in the ordinance of sealing." in 1862. *(LDS Biographical Encyclopedia 1:194)* Joseph Smith forthrightly told his Brother Hyrum when he "did in one case undertake to seal without counsel" that "if he did not stop it he would go to Hell" *(Letter of Brigham Young to William Smith, 10 August 1845)*

These keys will never be lost (in this dispensation)

D&C 27:13 Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;

D&C 65:2 The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.

God will ensure these keys continue

D&C 43:4-7 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.

For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.

To preside over the keys of the Priesthood, a person must -

Must be an Apostle (having been ordained to that office by one holding the same authority)

D&C 27:12 And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them;

13 Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *(see D&C 107:35; 112:16; 124:128)*

Must have received all of the ordinances

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

D&C 64:5 And the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.

D&C 84:19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

Must have the fullness of the Priesthood

Joseph Smith: "If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it ... by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." *(Teachings p. 308)*

Brigham Young: "I know there are those in our midst who will seek the lives of the Twelve as they did the lives of Joseph and Hyrum. We shall ordain others and give the fullness of the priesthood, so that if we are killed the fullness of the priesthood may remain." *(History of the Church 7:230)*

Must live Plural Marriage

Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church:...You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to My law: For it is not meet that men who will not abide My law shall preside over My Priesthood;

Revelation to John Taylor, October 13th, 1882.

"A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law."

John Taylor, October 10th, 1882, Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

Must accept and perpetuate the teachings of predecessors

1 Cor 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

v8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Jude 3 ... ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.

Mosiah 18:19 And he commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.

D&C 52:9 ... saying none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written ... *(see v. 36)*

TPJS 368 ... if any man preach any other gospel than that which I have preached he shall be cursed.

TPJS 214 How, it may be asked, was this known to be a bad angel? by his contradicting a former revelation.

Must perpetuate all the ordinances

"Can any man or set of men officiate in dispensing the laws and administering the ordinances of the Kingdom of God or of the kingdoms and governments of the world legally, without first obeying those

laws and submitting to those ordinances themselves?...do not forget that no man has authority to officiate in the ordinances of heavenly or earthly governments only so far as he has obeyed them himself."

Brigham Young, October 8th, 1854.

D&C 64:5 And the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.

As detailed in previous study guides - men like John Woolley, Joseph Musser, and Rulon Allred, and their successors in the Apostolic United Brethren qualified in all of these areas, and stood as prophets of God and Presidents of the Priesthood.

A critical look at Priesthood Authority claims of other groups

"By proving contraries, truth is made manifest"
Joseph Smith

It is not my desire to attack the character of anyone, but to examine the claims of others in the light of scriptures & teachings of the prophets. Others may be good and sincere, but authority and exaltation requires more than this.

We will examine six types of claims of authority -

The Modern LDS Church (RLDS etc.)

Fallen prophet -
FLDS / 2nd Ward – Centennial Park / Naylor / Blackmore / Thompson

Lineage / Council of Fifty -
LeBaron - Joel / Ross / Collier / Black / Green & United ...

Authority lost / unnecessary -
Independents - Woolley / Indian Prophet / Modern

Re-restoration -
Peterson / TLC / Art Bulla / Robert Crossfield

Continual succession of keys and ordinances -
Apostolic United Brethren

Reasons why the LDS Church First Presidency does not preside over the keys

They do not live plural marriage (which is essential to preside)

"When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others."
John Taylor, 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222.

"For it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood;"
Revelation to John Taylor, 13 October 1882.

"You might as well deny Mormonism and turn away from it as to oppose the plurality of wives. Let the presidency of this Church, and the twelve apostles, and all the authorities unite and say with one voice that they will oppose that doctrine, and the whole of them would be damned."
Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 5:203.

"What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of 'Mormonism', more properly termed the Gospel of the Son of God? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in its fulness. Were the Church to do that as an entirety God would reject the Saints as a body. The authority would be withdrawn, with its gifts and powers, and there would be no more heavenly recognition of the administrations among the people. The heavens would permanently withdraw themselves, and the Lord would raise up another people of greater valor and stability, for his work must, according to His unalterable degrees, go forward ..."
Charles W. Penrose, Deseret Evening News, April 23rd, 1885.

"The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood, and to find themselves very speedily outside the Church and Kingdom of God; while he would raise up others that would honor and observe his law."
Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885.

"But I want to say to the Latter-day Saints that no man upon the face of the earth has any right or any authority to perform a plural marriage, and there are no plural marriages today in the Church of Christ, because no human being has a right to perform them.
Heber J. Grant, Conference Report, April 1921, p. 202.

They do not perpetuate the restored Gospel

D&C 64:5 And the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, <u>inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances</u>.

"Now for Elijah. The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to <u>receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances</u> belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven."

Joseph Smith, Teachings ..., p. 337.

They attempted to give Canaanites the Priesthood and still attempt to do so -

"Whenever the seed of Judah mingled with the seed of Cain, they lost their Priesthood and all blessings. As an ensample – let the Presidency, Twelve, Seventies, High Priests, Bishops, and all the Authorities say, now we will all go and mingle with the seed of Cain and they may have all the privileges they want. We lift our hands to heaven in support of this – that moment we lose the Priesthood and all blessings, and we would not be redeemed until Cain was."

Brigham Young Addresses 2:81, 5 January 1852.

They have sought and obtained the friendship of the world -

"There is nothing that would soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them. In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations, principalities and powers in the eternities of the Gods."

Brigham Young, 8 April 1862, Journal of Discourses 10:32 (see 4:38 & 10:273).

"To be at peace with the Government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who were not of their faith and to share in the confidence of the Government and people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle."

Petition of Amnesty to Pres. Harrison , Messages of the First Presidency, Vol.3, p.229+

"My greatest happiness I find in the goodwill and friendship that has developed among all classes of people at home and abroad toward the LDS church during my lifetime. In place of early-day persecution and bitterness we now enjoy high regard and happy associations with all denominations."

Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Tribune, 22 November 1938.

These are just a few of around 100 reasons why the modern LDS Church nolonger presides over the keys of the Priesthood. Several of our study guides deal with the LDS Church -

The Unchangeable Gospel -
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/gospel_study_guide_1.pdf
Keys & Celestial Plural Marriage -
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide4b.pdf
Priesthood Restrictions -
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide_lineage2.pdf

Does the President of the Priesthood have to be President of the Church?

A man who presided over the keys of the Priesthood could be the leader of the Church also, but he doesn't have to be - he may leave that role to someone else, or the Church might even select someone else. The Priesthood and Church can and have often have acted separately.

Joseph was sustained Church president 3 years after the Church was organized, Brigham Young was sustained to that position 3 years after the death of Joseph, John Taylor 3 years after Brigham's death, and Woodruff 2 years after Taylor's death. By what authority did they preside inbetween, and what position did they hold?

Joseph desired that Hyrum be Church President, whilst he take a higher calling - what calling was that?

Joseph told William Clayton that if the Church found out about his polygamy they might excommunicate him, but that it wouldn't mean anything. What was more important - his membership or keeping the commandments?

Likewise plural marriage was an excommunicatable offense in the Church during Joseph's lifetime (due to a policy instituted in Joseph's absence by Oliver Cowdery), yet he lived and performed such marriages, and taught it was essential to exaltation, whilst publicly acknowledging the policy of the Church. By what authority did Joseph perform such marriages? The Church policies didn't give him that right, so what other position enabled him to do so?

Brigham Young said - after the death of Joseph - that the people could chose Anne Lee (the Shakers leader) if they wanted to head the Church, but that - if they did - he held the keys of the Priesthood and would go and build up the kingdom despite the Church. What authority did he have and what position was he in to be able to do this?

During the first few hundred years in the Book of Mormon there was no established Church, and it was not until Alma formed one (under the authority of Mosiah) that such a Church existed. By what authority did Mosiah grant Alma to be Church President?

In the 1880s the Church leaders actually advised members in Idaho to resign their church membership so that they could take back the political power removed from them because of their beliefs. So, what was of greater importance - living their beliefs, and having the power to do so - or belonging to the Church?

The answer to these questions is simple - the Priesthood is higher than the Church and can act without it if necessary, and its head holds a higher calling than Church President, although such men have often held both callings.

The Church of Jesus Christ is an important organization, and will undoubtedly be set in order, but it is not - nor has it ever been – the highest or presiding organization.

Personally I believe that the LDS Church still performs several important purposes to a sufficient degree that the Lord allows them to continue to do so, and which no Fundamentalist group has the ability to take over those responsibilities to the same extent (such as spreading the Book of Mormon throughout the world and genealogical research).

They are like the wayward children of Israel traveling in the wilderness, who God continues to bears with and try to work with despite their failings, whilst a few amongst them (like Moses' 70 elders) try to keep alive all of the Gospel.

However, if the early Nephite Saints could live the Gospel without a Church or Church President for hundreds of years, and if Brigham Young believed the Priesthood keys and God's kingdom could continue without the Church, then whether the LDS Church is operating with reduced authority and responsibilities for the present time, or whether it exists within a Fundamentalist group in some form, is not as important as whether we find out where the keys of the Priesthood are and join with those who sustain those keys to build up the kingdom, and leave God to judge and deal with the Church as he sees fit.

The LeBarons

The LeBaron brothers and their claimed successors (such as Tom Green and Fred Collier) believe that Benjamin F. Johnson was the rightful Patriarchal successor to Joseph Smith, and that through his grandson, Alma Dayer, that authority has continued.

This leads to several questions -

1. Is there any evidence that Benjamin F. Johnson was an adopted son of Joseph Smith?

2. Even if he was – why did others (including Brigham Young) not qualify?

3. There were many others on the Council of Fifty (including Brigham Young) – why did they not qualify?

4. Johnson indicated he sustain Brigham Young as the one presiding over the keys and as the proper successor to Joseph Smith – how do they reconcile this?

5. Why is there no indication from Brigham Young of Johnson's authority? Why did he hope that Joseph's literal sons might take a special place?

6. We have no contemporary evidence that he claimed any special authority or performed any special ordinations – how do they reconcile this?

7. Alma Dayer LeBaron was one of Johnson's over 300 grandsons, why would he have been singled out from all his sons and other grandsons?

8. Why did the LeBaron brothers request sealings from Musser & Allred in the early 1950s?

9. Doesn't it undermine the credibility of their claims that they only made such claims after they were refused a request for authority to perform their own sealings?

10. Ross Wesley LeBaron – didn't he originally sustain Joel? didn't he commit himself to a mental asylum?

Note: Fred C. Collier, Robert Black & Tom Green claims authority through Ross

I would be grateful for any clarification on these points from anyone associated with any of these groups and claims.

Relevant Study Guide -

http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide_lineage1.pdf

The FLDS / Short Creek / Colorado City group

& Centennial Park / Blackmore group / Neilson/Naylor groups

When Joseph Musser appointed Rulon Allred as his counselor, ordained him (and Margarita Bautista) an Apostle, and appointed him as his Second Elder, LeRoy Johnson and a few other Council members opposed Musser, and ultimately considered him a fallen prophet. By the death of Charles Zitting they had become a completely separate group from those who continued to follow Musser and those he ordained Apostles.

Other points of history are worthy of note – Prior to Musser's appointment of Rulon his relationship with Johnson, Jeffs and others was strained due to him opposing the underaged and arranged marriages they were involved in and the disparity of wealth in Short Creek.

LeRoy Johnson did not succeed Musser because -

He did not fully accept the authority of his predecessor

He did not receive the fullness of the Priesthood, which is essential to preside

He was not appointed by his predecessor to succeed him

(It may be argued that Johnson got his authority through Zitting, but Zitting was not appointed by Musser either.)

If Johnson did not qualify then those who claim authority through him cannot qualify either. That includes:

Rulon Jeffs
Warren Jeffs
Winston Blackmore
Marion Hammon & Timpson
Frank Naylor

Study Guides 8 & 9 cover some of these points and history -

http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide8.pdf

http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide9.pdf

Some Thoughts on the Musser & Johnson lines

For me the main issue between the Musser and Johnson lines of succession is that of precedent and principle. I believe that the scriptures and prophetic teachings are clear in both of these areas, that the contemporary records and witnesses are reasonably coherent and accurate, and that in these areas I honestly believe that the weight of evidence is in the Musser / Allred line's favor.

I have covered the 'principle' aspect of this issue in Study Guides no. 1, 3, & 4, so I would like to look more at 'precedent' -

Musser wrong to ordain Apostles without approval of Council?

Brigham Young called men as Apostles without the knowledge of the other Apostles - such as Joseph F. Smith, Daniel H. Wells, Jedediah Grant, Joseph Young, and Brigham Young jr. None of the Apostles questioned his ability to do this or the authority of those ordained.

Did Brigham Young have more authority as Church President than Priesthood President? If Musser was a successor to Joseph Smith (and Brigham Young) and held the same keys - then didn't he have the same authority?

Musser was a fallen prophet?

You are right that there are procedures to remove the President, and when unrighteousness can be proved this is indeed possible. When was such a court called for Joseph Musser? What unrighteousness would he have been charged with? Would Rulon Allred and Margarita Bautista have been included in passing judgement? What about D&C 43:4-7?

Musser went too far?

According to Centennial Park - “Charles F. Zitting, LeRoy Johnson, J. Marion Hammon, Guy H. Musser, Rulon T. Jeffs, Richard S. Jessop, Carl Holm and Alma A. Timpson did not oppose Rulon Allred”

Every journal I have read and every personal witness I have spoken to has always given me the impression that Rulon's calling to the Council (prior to him being called as 2nd Elder) was opposed from the beginning by all of “Barlow's Council” except perhaps Richard Jessop. Zitting, Kelsch & Woolley didn't seem to care either way, and there is some doubt as to whether Zitting ever sustained Johnson, and Kelsch and Woolley (who were senior) certainly didn't. I'd love to see other contemporary accounts that might differ from this.

A Council with a President or a President with a Council?

Some of the groups make a point of saying that they have a Council with a President
Whereas – they say – the A.U.B. has a President with a Council

It seems to me that there are several problems with the idea that the President of the Priesthood is subordinate to the other Apostles -

1. When Joseph and Oliver were the only Apostles could Oliver have rightly had the authority to 'split' off and form his own group?

2. Since Cowdery, Whitmer & Harris (who made up the majority of the Apostles prior to 1835) all left the Church - did they have more authority by virtue of being in a majority? Was Joseph wrong by not being in agreement with them?

3. Did Joseph Smith have less authority before 1835 because there was no Quorum of Twelve?

4. Where would this have left Joseph Smith during the Kirtland era when only a small minority of the Apostles fully sustained him?

5. What if the majority of the Apostles hadn't sustained Brigham Young (a third didn't after the death of Joseph)?

6. If Apostles reject a revelation from the Prophet and reject those he has ordained isn't that apostasy and doesn't that adversely affect their authority?

7. When and from whom did the previous Council obtain their second anointings?

8. Who is to decide who is worthy if not the Presiding Priesthood head - who is the worthy senior himself?

Don't get me wrong - I do believe that the Council has an invaluable role and serves an essential purpose, but I don't think they can supersede their President.

Independent Fundamentalists

Most Independents do not accept the idea of a continual line of succession of the keys of the Priesthood to the present day, or that one presides over those keys at this time. This contradicts the scriptures and Joseph Smith

> D&C 27:13 Unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;
>
> D&C 65:2 The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.

Some believe that the keys are held by an immortal white Indian Prophet, yet sadly no one can find him to consult on matters of authority or to officiate in ordinances. God intended the keys to be passed among his mortal servants

> D&C 43:4-7 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.
>
> But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.
>
> For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.

Some believe that by holding the Melchizedek Priesthood they have sufficient authority. Joseph Smith taught against this

> D&C 132:18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, <u>through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power</u>, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; ...
>
> Joseph Smith: "the sealing power is always vested in one man, and that there never was, nor never would be, but one man on the earth at a time to hold the keys of the sealing power in the Church. That all sealings must be performed by the man holding the keys, or by his dictation" *(Letter of Brigham Young to William Smith)*
>
> The Lord to John Taylor: "No person, or people, or nation can enter into the principle of celestial marriage unless they come in by me, saith the Lord, and obey the law of my Gospel through the medium of him who is appointed unto this power, as made known unto my people through my servant, Joseph" *(Uncanonized Revelation to John Taylor 25/26 June 1882. Unpublished Revelations 80:6-7.)*

Relevant Study Guides & Resources -

> http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide4b.pdf
> http://www.mormonfundamentalism.org/study/letter_to_independent_fundamentalist.pdf

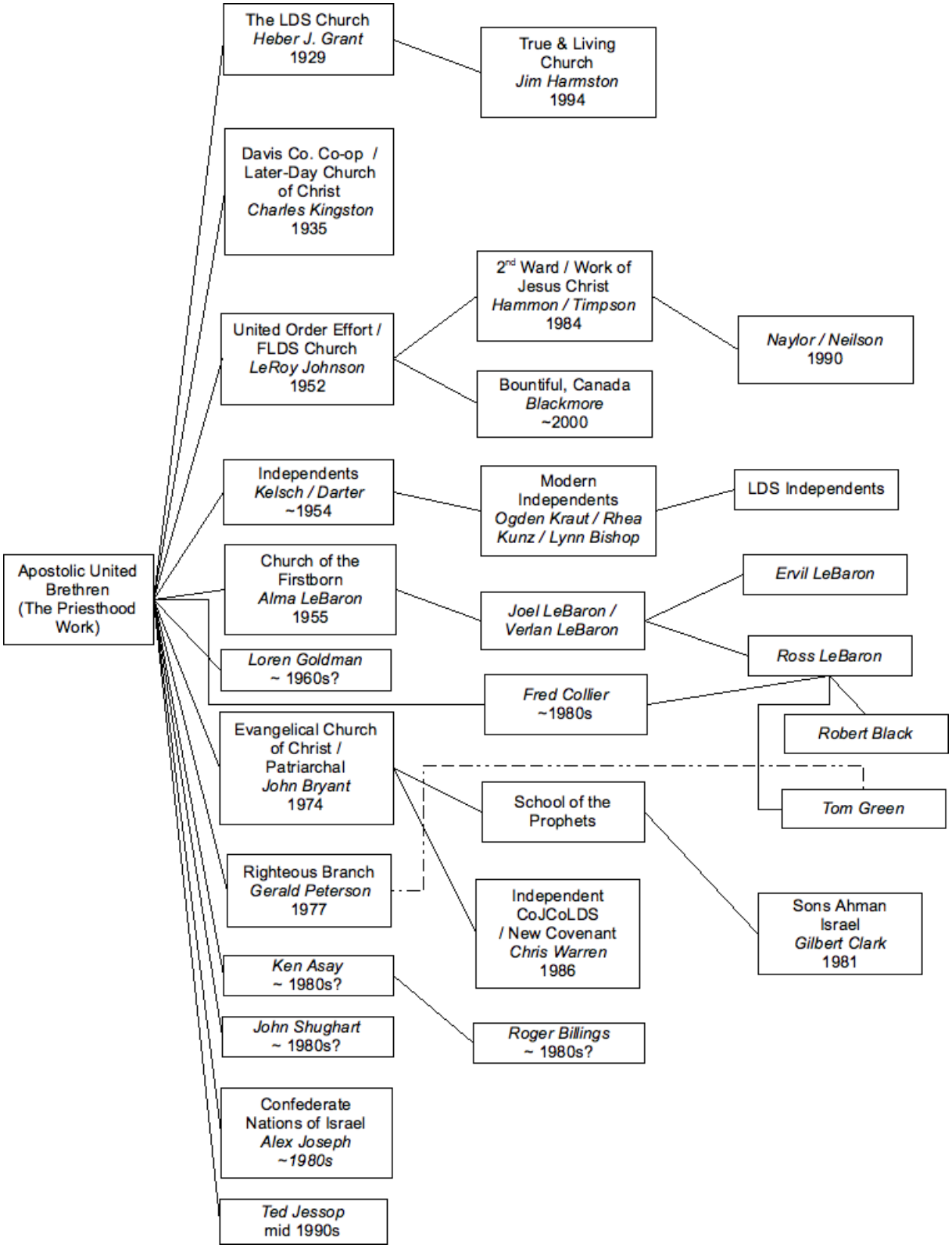
Comparison of Authority Claims

	LDS	FLDS	LeBaron	Independ	Peterson	TLC	AUB
1 presides	Y	Y	Y[1]	N	Y	Y	Y
authorized polygamy	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
keys continued	N[2]	Y	Y[3]	N[4]	N[5]	N	Y
apostleship	Y	Y	N	N	N[6]	N[7]	Y
all ordinances	N	N[8]	N	N	N	N[9]	Y
fullness of priesthood	N[10]	N	N[11]	N	N	Y[12]	Y
lives polygamy	N	Y	Y	Y[13]	Y	Y	Y
accept predecessors	N	N	N[14]	N	Y	Y	Y
performs all ordinances	N	N	N	N[15]	N	Y	Y

Admittedly some of these areas are open to interpretation. See the footnotes for explanations.

1 There were many contemporary competing claims from the brothers.
2 Heber J. Grant claimed the keys of plural marriage were no longer on the earth.
3 They do not seem to claim a continuation of the Apostolic keys, and it is unclear what position they attribute to Johnson.
4 Some do believe that all Melchizedek Priesthood holders hold and are entitled to exercise all of the keys.
5 Based on an angelic ordination by Rulon Allred after his death.
6 Peterson was not an Apostle during the life of the man he claimed to succeed.
7 Harmston was not an Apostle during the life of the man he claimed to succeed.
8 The FLDS did not receive 2nd anointings, and so could not legitimately perpetuate them. This may be true of endowments.
9 They do not claim a continuation of ordinances from Joseph Smith to the present day.
10 There are indications that aspects of this have changed, including its meaning.
11 Some claim Ross had or gave 2nd anointings, but other followers of him say this wasn't so.
12 However, not in a continual line of succession between mortal beings.
13 However, many independents spend their whole lives in monogamy.
14 They do not accept Brigham Young as a true and full successor to Joseph.
15 Although Independents believe that LDS Church leaders were wrong to give up plural marriage because of difficult circumstances, many excuse themselves that their circumstances prevent them from consecration, endowments etc.

Fundamentalist Groups



The Apostolic United Brethren

(or Priesthood work)

We are a Priesthood organization, headed by Apostles, and led by revelation. The primary purpose of our group is to keep alive all of the doctrines, laws and ordinances of the Gospel. We believe in all of the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and in all of the standard works of scripture.

We have several thousand members across the mid-West of American and Mexico. With congregations in in Montana, Wyoming, Arizona (Spanish speaking), Missouri, and several in Utah.

Amongst our members are doctors, nurses, teachers (even university professors), musicians, artists, authors, business owners, construction workers, farmers, and almost every type of profession. We also have members from South America, Asia and Europe.

In some of our communities we have our own private schools, and member-run businesses. Many such towns are organized into United Orders, that seek to live the Law of Consecration.

We have chapels in which Sacrament meetings, Sunday School & Priesthood classes, Relief Society and youth meetings take place, as well as Firesides and social functions such as dances (waltzes and barn dances) and sporting activities. Every aspect of the Gospel and every blessing is available to us as fast as we are ready and worthy to receive them.

Membership

To qualify for baptism a person must be living a good moral life, and have a good understanding and strong testimony of the Gospel. They must be committed to living all of the Gospel, and accept the authority by which the baptism is performed.

They must not have been ever involved in perpetrating an abortion, adultery, spousal or child abuse, or incest. Other organizations are better suited at dealing with these challenges - that is not a part of our mission.

Membership usually comes after a period of personal study and meetings with Priesthood representatives. This is to ensure that a person understands and is prepared for the commitment they are making.

Line of Succession

Presidents of the Priesthood & Church

Priesthood Presidents		Church Presidents
(1929-44)	Joseph Smith	*(1833-44)*
(1844-77)	Brigham Young	*(1847-77)*
(1877-87)	John Taylor	*(1880-87)*
(1887-98)	Wilford Woodruff	*(1889-98)*
	Lorenzo Snow *(1898-1901)*	
	Joseph F. Smith *(1901-18)*	
John W. Woolley *(1918-28)*		Heber J. Grant *(1918-45)*
Lorin C. Woolley *(1928-34)*		George Albert Smith *(1945-51)*
J. Leslie Broadbent *(1934-35)*		David O. McKay *(1951-70)*
John Y. Barlow *(1935-49)*		Joseph Fielding Smith *(1970-72)*
Joseph W. Musser *(1949-1954)*		Harold B. Lee *(1972-73)*
Rulon C. Allred *(1954-77)*		Spencer W. Kimball *(1973-85)*
Owen A. Allred *(1977-2005)*		Ezra Taft Benson *(1985-94)*
J. LaMoine Jenson *(2005 -)*		Howard W. Hunter *(1994-95)*
		Gordon B. Hinkley *(1995-)*

Presidents of the Priesthood

1918 – 2005

John W. Woolley

Lorin C. Woolley

J. Leslie Broadbent

John Y. Barlow

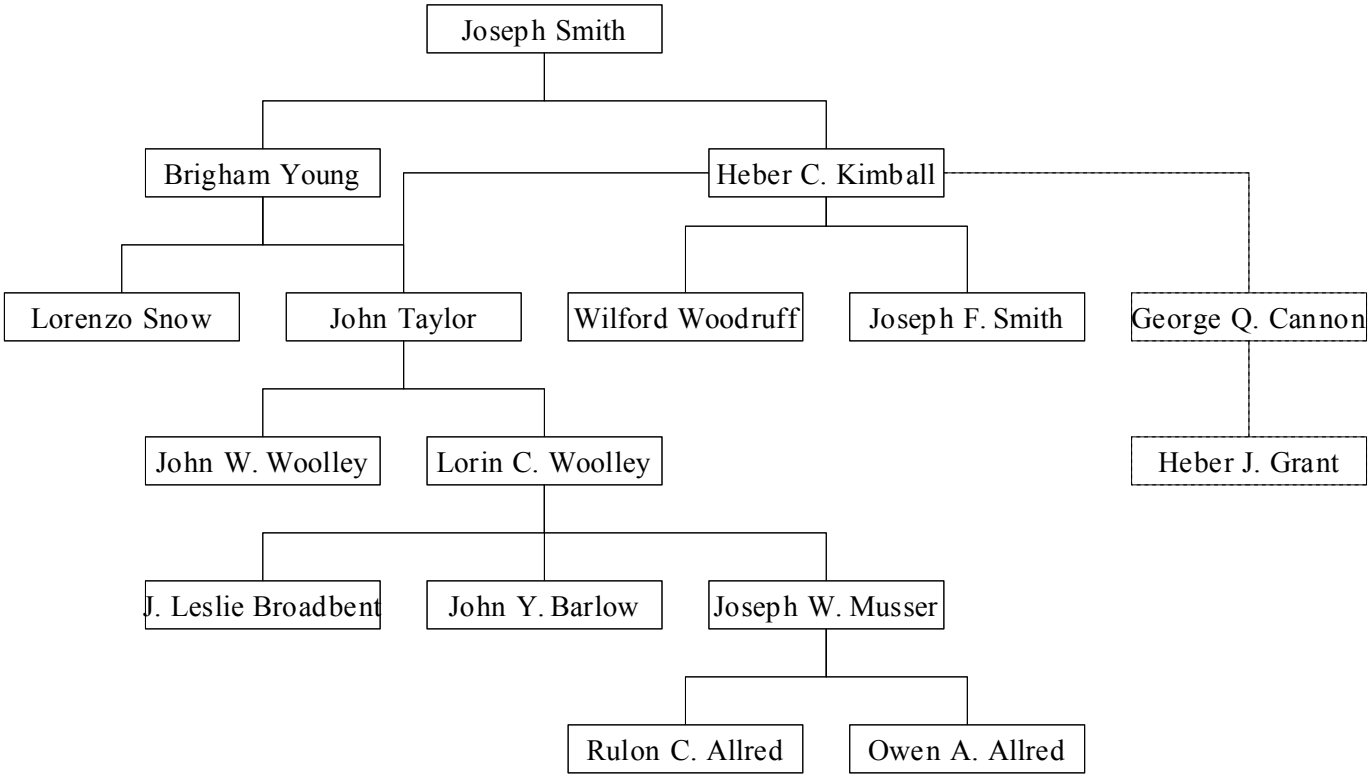
Joseph W. Musser

Rulon C. Allred

Owen A. Allred

Apostolic Lines of Authority

Apostolic Lines of Authority



See the following study guides and resources -

The 1886 Ordinations - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide5b.pdf
Heber J. Grant or John W. Woolley? http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide7.pdf
Lorin Woolley to Joseph Musser - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide8.pdf
Rulon & Owen Allred - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide9.pdf
Related to the 1886 Meeting - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/additional_1886_accounts.pdf
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/last_prophecies_john_taylor.pdf
http://www.mormonfundamentalism.org/study/1886_meeting_hi.htm (video)
Related to Rulon & Owen Allred - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/owen_principle_hi.htm (video)
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/rulon_testimony_hi.htm (audio)

Personal Conclusion

I honestly believe that the principles of succession are taught plainly in the scriptures and teachings of the early Prophets and Apostles, and that most claimants either try to argue that such principles are irrelevant, or that they are a special exception, rather than trying to show how their claims meet such requirements.

It also seems to me - from my own studies and comparisons - that most groups and claimants also vary too widely in one respect or another from the teachings, laws or ordinances restored through Joseph Smith to be considered legitimate continuations of the quorums and organizations he set up.

I also believe that - to those with access to the information – the line of succession is clear. However, unless a person has been fortunate enough to have been a personal witness to certain events, they have often had to rely solely on others recollections, and their own spiritual impressions.

Yet, in the last few decades journals of general authorities from the 1880s to 1920s have become more readily available, and in the last few years contemporary records from the 1930s to late 1950s have been made more accessible. The publication of Joseph Lyman Jessop's journals, Joseph Musser's sermons, and research by Prof's Carmon Hardy, Sontag Bradley, Quinn, Marianne Watson and Ken Driggs have helped clear up many misconceptions that arose from third hand accounts and misremembered recollections.

Work is being done on making records from the A.U.B. archives more widely available, and responses to anti-Mormon-Fundamentalist accusations have been written and will be published.

Having said all this - it seems to me that many claims have a number of inconsistencies that seriously undermine those claims, and leave us with few contenders that we can take seriously. Although only a spiritual witness can ultimately prove to us whether the “first vision” or 1886 visitations happened, I personally believe that the evidence that Joseph LaMoine Jenson now presides over the keys of the priesthood is more substantial and reliable than any other living person.

Most of the accusations against the actions of Rulon, Owen or LaMoine have seemed to be to me the same sort of ones often made about Brigham Young, and I worry that people expect a level of perfection of their Priesthood Presidents that no prophet has ever lived up to, and that we as individuals couldn't.

I have good friends in other groups and amongst Independents, and if this discussion was on any other subject than authority then I suspect that we would have few disagreements, but as the scriptures and teachings of the prophets are so plain on there being just one man who presides over the keys of the priesthood, then that situation expects us to discover who that one man is, and when we find out who that is to be prepared to explain why he is the “one” to those seeking to find it out for themselves.

About the Author

After I finished school I found that many of my friends were becoming involved in reckless lifestyles that were bringing them more problems than happiness, and I realized I needed to find our God's purpose for my life. I went to the city library to find some religious books, and whilst I was there the word "Mormon" came into to my mind. I found out that there was a Book of Mormon, a dusty old copy of which they found for me in their basement storage. From the moment I picked it up and it fell open near the middle of Alma 32 I knew it was true.

I knew nothing of the 'Mormon' Church, but around the same time made friends with a young woman a friend of mine fancied and had introduced me to. I was impressed with her high standards and enthusiastic belief in God. I learned that she was a 'Mormon' and from her learned where the nearest chapel was. On my first visit I approached the missionaries and asked to learn more. Within a couple of weeks I was baptized, on Christmas Eve of that year. I was a devout Latter-day Saint, and had many good experiences in the LDS Church for which I am grateful.

Whilst attending the British Missionary Training Center I bought a book from the LDS bookstore there titled “Unpublished Revelations.” Within its pages were revelations from the Lord to John Taylor stating that it was necessary to live plural marriage to preside over the Priesthood and that plural marriage would never end. This led to me having many questions about the course the Church had taken since the death of Joseph F. Smith, the last Church President to live that principle.

When I returned from my mission I was married to the young woman I mentioned early in the London temple. On our honeymoon we studied the Gospel together intensively, and realized that - in order for God's promised to be true and be fulfilled - there must be Priesthood authority and those living higher ordinances outside of the Church. Whilst babysitting for a friend of ours I also found a copy of a book on the Adam-God doctrine, and came to understand and accept Brigham Young's teachings on that subject.

Sharing questions and thoughts we had with our other Latter-day Saint friends quickly led to the Church excommunicating us. My wife's family - although they were not active in the LDS Church did not take this well, nor did our friends from Church. But fortunately by that time we had found others who accepted all of the Gospel, and had received the authority to live it. Through accepting and trying to live all of the Gospel we also received greater understanding and blessings, and the opportunity to receive all of the ordinances and live all of the laws necessary for exaltation.

We have now been involved in the “fullness” of the Gospel for over a decade, and live in a community of like-minded Latter-Day Saints, with whom we are working together to try to build up God's kingdom. Our testimonies are stronger than ever regarding the principles revealed through Joseph Smith, and the authority restored to him that continues to the present day.

Index to Previous Study Guides

Authority Study Guides:

The Priesthood & the Keys - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide1c.pdf
The Fullness of the Priesthood & Holy Order - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide2.pdf
Authority Keys & Commission - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide3b.pdf
Keys & Celestial Plural Marriage - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide4b.pdf
The 1886 Ordinations - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide5b.pdf
The Manifesto & Authority - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide6.pdf
Heber J. Grant or John W. Woolley? http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide7.pdf
Lorin Woolley to Joseph Musser - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide8.pdf
Rulon & Owen Allred - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide9.pdf
A Look at Other 'Fundamentalist' Claims - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide10.pdf

Supplements -
Authority & Lineage - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide_lineage1.pdf
Priesthood Restrictions - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/authority_study_guide_lineage2.pdf

Additional Study:

Related to the 1886 Meeting - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/additional_1886_accounts.pdf
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/last_prophecies_john_taylor.pdf
http://www.mormonfundamentalism.org/study/1886_meeting_hi.htm (video)
Other - http://www.mormonfundamentalism.org/study/letter_to_independent_fundamentalist.pdf
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/excommunication.pdf
Related to Rulon & Owen Allred - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/owen_principle_hi.htm (video)
http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/rulon_testimony_hi.htm (audio)

Other Study Guides on Different Subjects -

The Unchangeable Gospel - http://mormonfundamentalism.org/study/gospel_study_guide_1.pdf
Celestial Plural Marriage Overview - http://www.mormonfundamentalism.org/study/celestial_marriage_study_guide_misc.pdf